

IX.

NOTICE OF STONE LAMPS RECENTLY FOUND IN THE PARISHES OF MONIKIE AND INVERARITY. BY JOHN STURROCK, F.S.A. Scot.

The stone lamps which I have pleasure in forwarding to you for exhibition, with a few remarks regarding their use, may be the means of bringing to light many other specimens throughout the country.

When my attention was first called to these articles, they were generally found in use about farm-yards for holding water for fowls, and it was not until I procured such undoubted specimens, as that marked No. 1, that the class of objects to which I allude could be designated as "stone lamps"; and on making inquiry at some of the older inhabitants of the district, I learned that, although not in their days, these articles were formerly in general use in most of the country cottages before the introduction of the common iron crusie. I need not remark that many examples may have been in use even after that date.

The substance generally burned in these lamps was the refuse fat which was unfit for the making of candles. This had been placed in the stone dish, and perhaps melted sufficiently over the fire to allow of the introduction of the wick, which was placed round the sides of the dish, and in such a manner as that adopted by the Esquimaux at the present time. On the introduction of fish oil into the inland districts, however, these rude lamps soon gave way to the more compact and handy iron crusie.

It will be noticed that specimen No. 1, which was found lying at the kitchen door of an old house at Newlandhead, Monikie, is of a

better form than any of the other specimens. It is provided with a handle, and has channels for the wick, or perhaps the channels may also have served the purpose of conveying back into the basin the melted tallow or fat which had been drawn forward by the wick, and had not been consumed. This lamp weighed $4\frac{3}{4}$ lbs., and is $8\frac{3}{4}$ inches in length over all, and $4\frac{1}{4}$ inches diameter at the basin, and the handle is $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches diameter; the basin for holding the fat is $2\frac{5}{8}$ inches diameter, and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep; at the outer end is a channel cut to a circle of $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches diameter and about $\frac{3}{16}$ of an inch deep, with a small channel cut in the centre, as if for the purpose of holding a third wick at a higher level than those at the sides. All the channels are connected with the basin proper.

Specimen No. 2, which was found when cleaning the foundation of an old house at Lovehall, Monikie, is nearly circular in form. It weighs $2\frac{6}{16}$ lbs., and is 5 inches in diameter and $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches thick, having a basin hollowed out in the centre $2\frac{1}{4}$ inches in diameter and $1\frac{1}{8}$ deep.

Specimen No. 3, found in a wall of an old house at Craighton, Monikie, is of an oblong form, weighing $5\frac{3}{4}$ lbs., is 8 inches lengthways, and 5 inches in its greatest width, and $3\frac{1}{8}$ inches deep; the basin is of a similar shape, $5\frac{3}{4} \times 3$ inches and $1\frac{1}{8}$ inch deep.

The other specimens in my collection are similar in their general character to those exhibited, but vary in shape from an almost square to the circular form. They are all composed of the same material, *i.e.*, old red sandstone.

Perhaps the most interesting specimen (if it can be classed as a lamp) is that made from the bottom of a glass bottle. It was found when cleaning out the foundation of an old house at Cotton of Overston, parish of Inverarity, along with specimen No. 4, which is more rude in design than No. 1. It will be observed that, in chipping the edges of this vessel, great care had been exercised in leaving sufficient of the flat part to form a lip or handle; and comparing it with the stone specimens, and having regard to its association with one of these stone specimens, I have little hesitation in coming to the conclusion that it had also been used as a lamp.